

Your Child's  
Learning  
Starts Early



The First Years Last Forever



A Partnership of the  
California Children & Families Commission  
and the Children & Families County Commissions

# The First Years Last Forever



## Tips To Remember

### Give your child love and attention.

- Read, sing and talk with your child each day.
- Meet your child's needs right away.
- Answer your baby's cries and your child's questions.

### Make safe play areas for your child.

- Give your child time to run, jump and dance.
- Let your child do art, or play with blocks and puzzles.
- Give your child a chance to do things on his or her own.

### It is also good to:

- Set up times to play with other children.
- Let your child have a few choices.
- Be a kind and caring example for your child.



## Your Child's Learning Starts Early

You can help your child do well in school even before he or she starts kindergarten. Your child learns when you:

- Love and care for your child.
- Make sure your child is safe and healthy.
- Play and talk with your child everyday.

This booklet will tell you what you can expect for each age and how you can help your child grow and learn. But each child is different. Children change and grow at their own pace. If you are worried that your child does not do all of the things listed here, please talk to your doctor.

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## What You Can Expect During Your Baby's First Year

Your baby grows and changes so much during its first year.

**Your baby will learn to have some control over his or her body.**

Your baby should:

- Hold up his or her head.
- Crawl.
- Roll over.
- Sit up.
- Stand up—sometimes walk.



**Your baby starts to learn he or she is separate from others.**

Babies will:

- Look at their hands and toes and play with them.
- Cry when their parents leave.
- Learn their own names.

**Your baby learns to talk.**

- At first, babies cry and make throaty noises.
- Later, they babble and say mama and dada.
- Then they make lots of sounds.
- They start to name things and people they know.

**Babies start to play games.**

Babies can:

- Play with their hands.
- Show an interest in toys.
- Start to like “putting in and taking out” games.
- Start to like banging toys together.
- Carry around dolls or stuffed toys.



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## Your baby will start to relate to other people.

- First your baby will relate to you and other adults.
- Later, your baby will notice other babies.

## In order to grow, babies need:

- Someone who loves them, and helps them quickly when they cry.
- Someone who gets to know them.
- Someone to keep them safe and comfortable.
- Chances to move about and do new things.

## Your baby needs:

- Safe things to look at, grab, bang, pat and roll.
- Safe places to play.
- Chances to hear talking and to make sounds.



## What To Expect When Your Baby Is 1 To 2 Years Old

Your child has a lot of energy.

Your child:

- Walks more steadily.
- Takes things apart.
- Runs.
- Carries things.
- Pushes.
- Climbs.
- Pulls.
- Grabs things.



## Your child may be more active and like to:

- Flip light switches.
- Unwrap packages.
- Pour things.
- Empty drawers.

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## What To Expect When Your Baby Is 1 To 2 Years Old

**Between the first and second birthdays, your child:**

- Likes to copy the sounds and actions of others.
  - ♦ May pretend to do housework or yardwork.
- Wants to be independent.
  - ♦ May say “No!” a lot.
- Can have a short attention span.
- May try different ways to move his or her body by walking backwards or sideways.

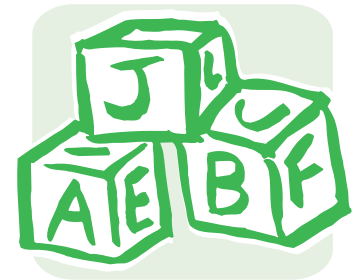


**Children may also:**

- Start to see how they are like and unlike other children.
- Notice how others feel.
- Play alone or with other toddlers.
- Learn more words.
- Understand more of what people say to them.

**At this age, your baby needs the chance to:**

- Explore in safe play places.
- Make his or her own choices (“Do you want the red cup or the blue one?”).
- Run, jump and play.
- Use small objects like puzzles and toys that can be stacked.
- Touch, taste, smell, hear and see new things.
- Learn that actions cause results (like when a stack of blocks gets too high it will fall over).
- Learn and use new words.
- Learn about kindness and caring.



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## What To Expect When Your Child Is 2 To 3 Years Old

### At this age, your child:

- Learns to notice more how others feel.
- May be stubborn and have temper tantrums.
- May enjoy being around other children.
- May like to jump, hop, roll and climb.
- Does a lot of pretend play.
- Learns lots of new words.
- Put together two, three and four word sentences.

### At this age, your child needs the chance to:

- Do puzzles, string beads and scribble.
- Do more things for himself or herself, such as putting on clothing.
- Sing, talk and learn more words.
- Play with other children.
- Go to the park, library, beach, zoo or go to other interesting places.



## What To Expect When Your Child Is 3 To 4 Years Old

### At this age your child:

- Starts to play with other children.
- Is more likely to take turns and share.
- Is friendly and giving.
- Starts to understand that other people have feelings and rights.
- Likes silly humor, riddles and jokes.
- Likes to please and be like others.

### Your child also:

- Enjoys new experiences.
- Starts to get dressed without help. May need help with shoelaces and buttons.
- May start to have fears ("Mommy, there's a monster under my bed.").
- May have imaginary friends.
- Likes to dance, run, skip, jump with both feet, catch a ball, and be active.
- Starts to speak in complete sentences.
- Has more control over hand and arm muscles.
- Tries out different ways to move his or her body.

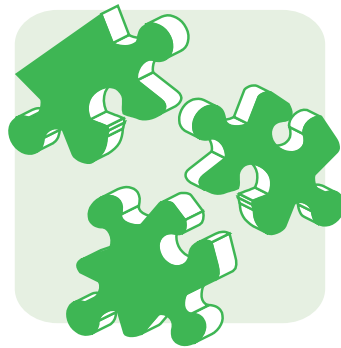
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## What To Expect When Your Child Is 3 To 4 Years Old

**At this age, your child needs the chance to:**

- Learn more and more words. Use books, games, art and music.
- Try to do things for himself or herself, like getting dressed.
- Draw with crayons and work puzzles.
- Build things and pretend.
- Play with other children. Learn to listen and take turns.
- Play, jump and run.



## What To Expect When Your Child Is 4 To 5 Years Old

**At this age, your child:**

- Is active and has lots of energy.
- Can change moods quickly. May go from loud and active one moment to shy and quiet.
- Enjoys more group activities. Can pay attention longer.
- Likes making faces and being silly.
- May form groups of friends and can be bossy.
- May change friendships quickly.

**Your child also:**

- May brag and name call during play.
- May try out swear words and bathroom words.
- Can be very imaginative.
- May like to exaggerate.
- Can be clumsy.
- Can be a great talker.
- Asks a lot of questions.
- Loves to use words in rhymes, nonsense and jokes.

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## What To Expect When Your Child Is 4 To 5 Years Old

**At this age, your child needs the chance to:**

- Try new things and learn within limits.
- Use child-safe scissors, crayons and jigsaw puzzles.
- Play outdoors.
- Explore and try new things.
- Group items that are alike.
- Use his or her imagination and be curious.
- See what reading and writing are used for.
- Listen to stories, poems and songs. Make up stories.



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For more information,  
please call **(800) KIDS-025**.



